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ABSTRACT

This book describes the innovative teaching style and methods of Marva Collins, the founder and principal of the Westside Preparatory School in Chicago (Illinois). The book traces Collins's career at Calhoun South and Delano Elementary Schools and the development of her distinctive approach, which involves teaching the total child, developing the child's character, and helping to build a positive self-image. While Collins's unorthodox teaching techniques elicited negative reactions from mainstream teachers and administrators, they earned the enthusiastic and growing support of parents and the community. This recognition led to her selection as director of a new private elementary school in the Garfield Park area of Chicago, sponsored by a local community college and the Chicago-based Alternative Schools Network. The book describes Collins's role in developing the Westside Preparatory School from an initial class of four students to an enrollment of 200 and in securing permanent facilities for the school. Numerous scenes are presented illustrating Marva Collins's commitment to engaging and challenging all of her students in the classroom. The following sections are appended: (1) questions from parents; (2) questions from teachers; (3) recommended phonics books; (4) a reading list for children ages 4-6; and (5) a reading list for the Westside Preparatory School. (AF)

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